

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 05717 300939Z

12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 300829Z AUG 74

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5638

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5717

E. 9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT KS

SUBJECT: PARK CALLS FOR EXPANDED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ROLE

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN PAST WEEK PRESIDENT PARK HAS USED TWO OCCASIONS TO EMPHASIZE HIS INTEREST IN EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES. PARK'S INSTRUCTIONS TO GOVERNMENT PARTIES AND THEIR LEADERS HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS AN EFFORT TO REINVIGORATE THE DRP AND YUCHONGHOE AND TO USE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS FOCUS FOR WIDER POLITICAL DEBATE IN THE POST-EMERGENCY MEASURES PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PAST WEEK PRESIDENT PARK HAS USED TWO OCCASIONS TO EMPHASIZE HIS INTEREST IN EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES.

2. IN AUG 25 MEETING WITH CABINET AND DRP-YUCHONGHOE LEADERS, PARK "DEMANDED" THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STRENGTHEN ITS FUNCTION OF CHECKING AND CRITICIZING THE ADMINISTRATION. HE ALSO CALLED ON ASSEMBLY LEADERS TO "INVIGORATE" LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES. DURING AN AUG 27 RECEPTION FOR DRP AND YUCHONGHOE LEADERS, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 05717 300939Z

PARK ALSO CALLED ON ASSEMBLYMEN TO CONDUCT PARTY

ACTIVITIES IN A MANNER TO PROMOTE INTERNAL STRENGTH AND UNITY. PARK EMPHASIZED THAT NEXT YEARS WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT FOR ROK AND CALLED FOR AN ALL-OUT EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE AND A SELF-SUSTAINING ECONOMY.

3. PARK'S INSTRUCTIONS TO GOVERNMENT PARTIES AND THEIR LEADERS HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS AN EFFORT TO REINVIGORATE THE DRP AND YUCHONGHOE AND TO USE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS FOCUS FOR WIDER POLITICAL DEBATE IN THE POST-EMERGENCY MEASURES PERIOD. THE DRP AND YUCHONGHOE HAVE REACTED POSITIVELY TO PARK'S SIGNAL FOR GREATER ACTIVITY. DRP FLOOR LEADER KIM YONG-TAE WAS QUOTED BY PRESS AS SAYING CABINET MEMBERS WITHOUT "FIRM CONVICTIONS" WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED, AND ASSEMBLY VICE SPEAKER KIM CHIN-MAN REPORTEDLY CALLED FOR END TO RESTRICTION OF FREE SPEECH ON ASSEMBLY FLOOR.

4. MOST INTERESTING MANIFESTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES' NEW FREEDOM HAS BEEN A SERIES OF VICIOUS DRP ATTACKS ON SEOUL CITY MAYOR YANG TAEK-SHIK. DRP ASSEMBLY LEADERS HAVE CALLED ON YANG TO RESIGN FOR "HIS RESPONSIBILITY" WITH REGARD TO AUG 15 INCIDENT RESULTING IN MRS. PARK'S DEATH. DRP FLOOR LEADER KIM YONG-TAE IS QUOTED AS SAYING YANG SHOULD COMMIT SUICIDE AND HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ORDERED YANG FROM COMMITTEE ROOM DURING ONE HEARING.

5. YANG, AS SEOUL MAYOR, WAS NOMINAL SPONSOR OF THE NATIONAL DAY EVENT AND ONE OF THE SEVERAL PROMINENT FIGURES ON STAGE WHO REACTED IGNOMINIOUSLY WHEN ASSASSIN'S SHOTS WERE HEARD. WIDELY TELEVISED FILM OF AUG 15 INCIDENT SHOWS THAT YANG, SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON, CHIEF PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY KIM CHONG YOM AND PRESIDENTIAL PROTOCOL SECRETARY CHO SANG-HO, ALL IMMEDIATELY FELL TO FLOOR WHEN ASSASSIN BEGAN FIRING AND STARTED CRAWLING AWAY ON HANDS AND KNEES. NONE MADE ANY ATTEMPT TO PROTECT EITHER PRESIDENT OR MRS. PARK. (YANG WAS SEATED FARTHEST FROM THE TWO PARKS.)

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 05717 300939Z

6. ATTACK ON YANG IN OBVIOUSLY CASE OF DRP PICKING A RELATIVELY SAFE TARGET WITHIN GOVERNMENT TO DEMONSTRATE ITS NEW "INDEPENDENCE" WHILE AT SAME TIME SHOWING POSITIVE LOYALTY TO THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY. (YANG IS NOT A MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURE.) AT SAME TIME THERE SPECULATION THAT MAJOR DRP ATTACK ON YANG IS ALSO INDIRECTLY AIMED AT OTHER MORE IMPORTANT PERSONAGES (I.E. CHIEF PRESIDENTIAL

SECRETARY KIM AND POSSIBLY SPEAKER CHONG) WHO PERFORMED IN A SIMILARLY INGLOUS MANNER AT TIME OF THE AUG 15 INCIDENT. BLUE HOUSE SECRETARIES INCLUDING KIM HAVE BEEN DEEPLY RESENTED BY DRP AND YUCHONGHOE LEADERS WHO RIGHTLY BELIEVE THEY BLOCKED ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT BY PARTY LEADERS. ALSO THE MOST VOCIFEROUS CRITIC OF YANG, KIM YONG-TAE, HAS PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS EITHER TO DRP LEADERSHIP OF THE SPEAKER'S SEAT ITSELF.

7. EDITORIAL REACTIONS TO POSSIBILITY OF GREATER ROLE FOR LEGISLATURE HAS BEEN FAVORABLE WITH PRESS VIEWING PARK'S REMARKS AS INDICATION GREATER POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. PRESS ALSO CRITICAL OF PAST ASSEMBLY FAILURE TO FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK CORRUPTION AND IRREGULARITIES IN GOVERNMENT.

8. OUTSIDE SOURCES, INCLUDING NDP ASSEMBLYMEN, HAVE EXPRESSED SOME OPTIMISM THAT PARK'S COMMENTS, COUPLED WITH EMERGENCE OF NEW NDP LEADER KIM YONG-SAM, INDICATE A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE FOR THE ASSEMBLY IN THE PERIOD AHEAD. THEY BELIEVE THAT PARK'S MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION IS DUE TO A COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDING A BELATED REACTION TO INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF THE PARK GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITARIANISM AND TO LONG TERM DISSATISFACTION ON PART OF PRO-GOVERNMENT LAW MAKERS WITH THEIR FIGUREHEAD ROLE. ONE ADDITIONAL FACTOR CITED IS GOVERNMENT'S POSSIBLE DESIRE TO USE THE ASSEMBLY ONCE AGAIN AS A REASONABLY CONTROLLABLE FORUM FOR VENTING, INSTEAD OF SUPPRESSING POLITICAL CRITICISMS, A ROLE IT PLAYED IN THE PRE-YUSHIN PERIOD.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SEOUL 05717 300939Z

9. AT SAME TIME, GOVERNMENT SOURCES DO WARN THAT PRESIDENT PARK CONTINUES TO EXPECT RESTRAINT ON PART OF HIS POLITICAL CRITICS. ACCORDING TO ONE ROKG OFFICIAL, THE PRESIDENT IS WAITING TO SEE WHETHER HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS WILL OPERATE WITHIN THE CURRENT POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OR "GO TOO FAR."
ERICSON

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